

NAVAL WAR COLLEGE
Newport, Rhode Island

I Could Get My Job Done If They
Would Just Leave Me Alone

By

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A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction
of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily
endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

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February 5, 2001

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Department of Joint Military Operations

20010511 037

16
REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

1. Report Security Classification: UNCLASSIFIED			
2. Security Classification Authority:			
3. Declassification/Downgrading Schedule:			
4. Distribution/Availability of Report: DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT A: APPROVED FOR PUBLIC RELEASE; DISTRIBUTION IS UNLIMITED.			
5. Name of Performing Organization: JOINT MILITARY OPERATIONS DEPARTMENT			
6. Office Symbol: C	7. Address: NAVAL WAR COLLEGE 686 CUSHING ROAD NEWPORT, RI 02841-1207		
8. Title (Include Security Classification): (UNCLASS) "I Could Get My Job Done, If They Would Just Leave Me Alone" (v)			
9. Personal Authors: Charles R. Blair, LCDR, USN			
10. Type of Report: FINAL	11. Date of Report: 05 Feb 2001		
12. Page Count: ■ 21	Adviser: Prof McIntyre		
13. Supplementary Notation: A paper submitted to the Faculty of the NWC in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the JMO Department. The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the NWC or the Department of the Navy.			
14. Ten key words that relate to your paper: Civil-Military Relations, Peace Enforcement, UNITAF Somalia, Military Operations Other Than War.			
15. Abstract: Within the military, it is a widely regarded belief that beyond the determination of the political objective, politics and the military do not mix. Recently, some senior military leaders have expressed consternation with civilian leadership involvement at what appears, to them at least, to be inappropriate levels within the military organization. They have expressed concern that this increased involvement has resulted in a less efficient and effective use of military forces in accomplishing the political objective. This fear of unwanted political "interference" has even lead to questioning of the political objective itself and the role of the military in achieving it. This point of view finds it's most vocal expression regarding military operations other than war (MOOTW). MOOTW, by their very nature, are more politically sensitive than the major theater wars on which the military has focused the majority of its training and dollars. Only reluctantly do military leaders concede their role in MOOTW, and then it is seen as out of the ordinary realm of military operations. This reluctance, and fear of unwanted interference has led to military leaders attempting to minimize political involvement and making changes in political objectives, sometimes with disastrous results.			
16. Distribution / Availability of Abstract: Abstract:	Unclassified X	Same As Rpt	DTIC Users
17. Abstract Security Classification: UNCLASSIFIED			
18. Name of Responsible Individual: CHAIRMAN, JOINT MILITARY OPERATIONS DEPARTMENT			
19. Telephone: 841-6461	20. Office Symbol:	C	

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INTRODUCTION

Within the military, it is a widely regarded belief that beyond the determination of the political objective, politics and the military does not mix. Recently, some senior military leaders have expressed consternation with civilian leadership involvement at what appears, to them at least, to be inappropriate levels within the military organization. They have expressed concern that this increased involvement has resulted in a less efficient and effective use of military forces in accomplishing the political objective they have been tasked to achieve. This fear of unwanted political "interference" has even lead to questioning of the political objective itself and the role of the military in achieving it.

This point of view finds it's most vocal expression regarding military operations other than war (MOOTW). "Military Operations Other Than War focus on deterring war, resolving conflict, promoting peace, and supporting civil authorities"¹ MOOTW, by their very nature, are more politically sensitive than the major theater wars on which the military has focused the majority of its training and dollars. Only reluctantly do military leaders concede their role in MOOTW, and, even then, it is seen as out of the ordinary realm of military operations. This attitude is a manifestation of the classic American way of war. "The idea that war is separate and distinct from MOOTW, rather than being at one end of a continuous spectrum of conflict, is a reflection of our culture and the American attitude regarding the role of the military in our society."² Generations of military leaders have been trained to believe that "we only do the "big ones," despite an American history dominated by the "small ones." Ask anyone from Central and South

¹ Joint Doctrine for Military Operations Other Than War, Joint pub 3-07, Joint Chiefs of Staff, 16 June 1995.

² J. D. Waghelstein, Lecture given at the Naval War College, Newport RI, January 24, 2001. Used with permission.

America about U.S. Marine involvement there during the 1920s and 1930s and you're likely to get a lesson in history with which few Americans are familiar.

The demise of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War meant the end of the dominant focus of over 40 years of military planning and training for the U.S. military and its allies. During the Cold War, the two superpowers confronted each other indirectly through support of opposing political groups in a variety of countries from Korea to Ethiopia. The focus of the military was clearly on fighting the next "big one." With the lack of a clearly discernable threat from another major super power, policy makers seem to have decided that the military as a tool of policy can be used in MOOTW well below the level of "vital national interest," much to the dismay of many senior military leaders.

Naturally, senior military leaders are reluctant to express their concerns about political interference openly, lest they become the next MacArthur in Truman vs. MacArthur. Consequently it's very difficult to find concrete examples of senior military leaders openly expressing criticism of political involvement in MOOTW. Rather, it exists in the background as an ethos and feeling that most in the military acknowledge, but that few articulate publicly. This strongly felt, yet vaguely articulated, belief is that once the political objective is determined and the military assigned the task the politicians should stand aside and watch. This belief influences how senior military leaders react to and plan for MOOTW, sometimes with adverse results.

Both the George H. Bush and the Clinton administrations established policies that linked humanitarian crises to our national interest. With the end of the Cold War and the lack of a clear national threat to survival, political leaders explored the role of the military

as a possible tool in achieving U.S. policy objectives in situations where a vital U.S. interest was not an issue. This was significant because it now meant that the military could find itself doing a mission it loathed much more routinely, and had managed to avoid, for the most part, thus far, namely, peace enforcement in OOTW. This has been particularly disturbing for senior military leaders because these types of operations do not fit the mold of the famous Weinberger-Powell doctrine and its focus on overwhelming force, discernable/achievable objectives, short duration, popular support, and clear exit strategy. Quite the opposite, MOOTW frequently require a minimal use of force, or an escalatory response, have vague and changing objectives, require perseverance, and may not have a clear exit strategy. Additionally, in a MOOTW the military will quite frequently be one of several organizations involved, and may not be the main focus of effort. Throw into this mix the evolution of a global, near real-time media presence and its attendant ability to influence public and political opinion on an unprecedented scale, and you have a military planners worst nightmare.

Why does it matter? MOOTW are frequently seen as a distraction from the military's ability to train for the next major theater war. It seems clear that the likelihood of U.S. being faced by a rival superpower is small for the foreseeable future, and that the future of the U.S. military will be dominated by more of these MOOTW in situations where U.S. national security interests are not clearly jeopardized. Attempts by a senior military commander to marginalize or prevent unwanted political intercourse, demand clear objectives, require firm end states and time tables for withdrawal will in fact have a greater negative impact on the success of the mission than the feared political involvement.

The limited length of this paper necessitates only a single case study can be analyzed here. There are of course many cases that would warrant consideration, but the one chosen, Somalia 1992-1994, is representative of the issues involved. This paper will examine how during the conception and execution of the Unified Task Force (UNITAF) mission, attempts by some senior military leaders to minimize unwanted political “interference” contributed to the failure of the UNITAF mission in the overall context of Somalia. Specifically, how the limitations imposed in planning and executing the mission by senior military leaders resulted in a purely military plan, and influenced policy determination which, in turn, led to a disconnect between the political/strategic objectives and the military objectives and means. Finally, it will provide the CINC or JTFC the lessons learned and show how courses of action that are a part of an overall political-military plan can be developed.

POST-COLONIAL SOMALIA 1960-1992

The US and UN operations in Somalia encountered a nation in collapse. The complete breakdown of civil institutions, lawlessness, and clan fighting had created a situation reminiscent of a post-apocalyptic movie of the “Road Warrior” genre. Somalia gained independence from colonial powers in 1960. Somalia’s brief attempt at democratic rule came to an end in 1969 following the overthrow of the Somali president by General Siad Barre, who “established a regime based upon communist slogans adopted from the Soviet Union’s agents who backed the rebellion”³ The Soviet Union supported General Barre with economic and military aid primarily as a way to counter-balance U.S. influence in the region via Ethiopia. When a socialist government took over

³ Lester H. Brune, *The United States and Post-Cold War Interventions. Bush and Clinton in Somalia, Haiti, and Bosnia 1992-1998.* (Claremont, CA: Regina Books, 1998), 14.

in Ethiopia, with whom Somalia was at war to regain territory lost in the late 19th century, the Soviets began supporting Ethiopia and demanded that Somalia cease its efforts to regain the lost territory, leaving Barre out in the cold. Sensing an opportunity, the U.S. then began providing support for General Barre.

Throughout the 1980s the U.S. gradually reduced economic aid and finally cancelled it completely in 1989. This, combined with General Barre's mismanagement of the economy, led to rebellion by Somali clans resulting in Barre's overthrow in 1991. "Barre's overthrow in January 1991 brought chaos to Somalia that a UN humanitarian effort could not contain. Somalia clans that united against Barre had not developed plans for a new government and, consequently, at least thirteen clans and sub clans subsequently fought for regional or national control."⁴

The UN became involved in Somalia with the passage of UNSCR 751, in April of 1992. UNSCR 751 established United Nations Operations in Somalia (UNOSOM), whose mission was to provide humanitarian assistance and facilitate an end to hostilities. Initially supplied with a force of only 50 unarmed observers, UNOSOM found itself unable to deliver humanitarian aid in the midst of banditry. With the passage of UNSCR 775 in August 1992, the UN tried to ensure delivery of relief aid by increasing the military presence of the UN. This angered leading Somali Warlords, particularly Mohamed Farah Aideed. "Aideed, who aspired to be the political leader of Somalia, opposed UN intervention because he feared that it would ratify Ali Mahdi's (his leading opponent) questionable election as president in a UN-supported conference in Djibouti in

⁴ Lester H. Brune, *The United States and Post-Cold War Interventions. Bush and Clinton in Somalia, Haiti, and Bosnia 1992-1998.* (Claremont, CA: Regina Books, 1998), 16.

mid-1991.”⁵ Aideed forces, subsequently, disrupted as much as possible further humanitarian efforts.

UNIFIED TASK FORCE (OPERATION RESTORE HOPE)

DECEMBER 9, 1992 - MAY 4, 1993

UNSCR 794 dated December 3, 1992 authorized a U.S.-led coalition, Unified Task Force (UNITAF) Somalia, which would have the following UN-mandated missions under Chapter VII of the UN Charter:⁶

- use all necessary means to establish as soon as possible a secure environment for humanitarian relief operations in Somalia.
- continuation of humanitarian assistance.

STRATEGIC/MILITARY OBJECTIVES

Faced with a growing humanitarian disaster, one highly visible in the media, President Bush decided that direct action must be taken. “Television supplied a moral imperative and the public support for Bush’s decision to intervene, but the U.S.’ national interest was not directly involved... Lacking a commitment to repair Somalia’s political order, Bush proposed to open the food supply routes and quickly withdraw the U.S. military, a concept which seriously qualified the chances for the UN to succeed in restraining Somalia’s warlords and achieving a peace settlement.”⁷

Strategic planning by the Bush administration was non-existent. In their minds, the mission only extended to establishing secure relief distribution within southern

⁵ Walter Clarke, Learning from Somalia. The lessons of Armed Humanitarian Intervention. ed Walter Clarke and Jeffrey Herbst (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, a Division of Harper Collins Publishers, INC, 1997), 5.

⁶ UN Security Council Resolution 794, December 3, 1992.

⁷ Lester H. Brune, The United States and Post-Cold War Interventions. Bush and Clinton in Somalia, Haiti, and Bosnia 1992-1998. (Claremont, CA: Regina Books, 1998), 20.

Somalia. From the announcement that the U.S. would send forces to Somalia, there were important questions about the U.S. political strategy for Somalia.

Sensing a disconnect between the U.S. vision for the operation and the UN's view that there needed to be a political settlement amongst the warlords, Secretary General Boutros-Ghali "asked the Bush team what a 'secure environment' for humanitarian relief required and what connection there was between the U.S. operation and a political settlement among Somalia's warring groups."⁸ The Pentagon response was that unlike Bosnia, the northeast African terrain was neither mountainous or tree covered, and that the Somali warlords were disorganized and unable to seriously threaten U.S. forces.⁹ There was, of course, no connection between U.S. involvement and political settlement among the warring parties, despite there being available extensive information regarding the true nature of the problem.

U.S. objectives were dominated by concerns to minimize the threat to U.S. forces and quickly turn over to the follow on UN led force. The UNITAF intervention in Somalia "was developed as a purely military operation, which the U.S. military would begrudgingly accept, so long as the State Department and the United Nations kept out of the way."¹⁰ Walter Clarke, former Deputy Chief of Missions at the U.S. Embassy in Magadishu, alleges that CENTCOM made changes to political guidance for Operation Restore Hope. "CENTCOM carefully removed the critical civil affairs and military police training components from the package. The restoration of the Somali National Police Force was a very high political priority, but instead of using the MPs to help retrain the

⁸ Ibid, 21

⁹ Ibid

¹⁰ Walter Clarke, Learning from Somalia. The lessons of Armed Humanitarian Intervention. ed Walter Clarke and Jeffrey Herbst (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, a Division of Harper Collins Publishers, INC, 1997), 9.

Somali police, UNITAF turned this matter over to the warlords for action, with predictable results.”¹¹ Clarke further asserts that CENTCOM changes were based upon several apparent concerns:

- (1) The original concept of the operation was that it would be over within weeks. CENTCOM wished to ensure that no encumbering activities developed during the operation to prolong its stay.
- (2) The U.S. Marine Corps is an expeditionary force that specializes in short-term, high-intensity combat operations. It is not trained or equipped for longer-term occupation-type operations.
- (3) CENTCOM wished to ensure that no encumbering requirements would be placed on the mission by the United Nations or other agencies of the U.S. government.

*In a virtually unprecedented development for the UN, the first drafts of UNSCR 794 and 814 were written in the Pentagon.*¹² (Italics added)

Efforts by senior military leaders, lacking a true appreciation for all of the forces at work in Somalia, to formulate, modify and influence policy resulted in a neutered effort whose overall imperative was ‘get us out quickly and without getting anyone hurt.’ The strictly military nature of the planning, intentionally so, meant that critical inter-agency planning to address political, economic, and social aspects of the crisis were overlooked. The attempts by senior military leaders to “fix” the problem of excessive political involvement in “military matters” resulted in a UNITAF force of over 38,000, which, while successful in establishing limited security for humanitarian aid efforts, did little to establish conditions for success by the follow on UNOSOM II force.

In a note to the State Department, Ambassador to Kenya Smith Hempstone wrote that “Somalia’s difficulties involved the strife of militant factions as well as food relief,...”¹³ Despite this wider political context being understood in parts of the U.S. government, it appears that General Colin Powell and other military leaders’ fear of

¹¹ Ibid

¹² Ibid

¹³ Ibid

extended military commitment in a MOOTW were sufficient to prevent any real consideration of the root problem.

UN EFFORTS AND OBJECTIVES

During the period of the UNITAF mission, the UN attempted to start the political reconciliation process through a series of conferences. The UN experienced two major problems, first, the UN and UNITAF disagreed on whether to deal directly with Somali military leaders, or whether to try and encourage Somalia Elders to replace them. Second, Somali warlords resented past UNOSOM I interference and were suspicious that the UN had their own agenda about who was going to end up in power in Somalia.¹⁴ UNITAF leaders preferred to deal directly with the key Somali military leaders as needed in order to deliver relief supplies. This led to an appearance of importance and legitimacy for some and illegitimacy for others, which men like Aideed were quick to exploit for their own purposes. This tendency for military leaders to seek out their counterparts undercut UN efforts to work via non-military leaders. The UN sponsored talks resulted in an agreement for a Transitional National Council (TNC) for Somalia. The TNC negotiated by the UN on 27 March 1993 was to include representatives of the Somali military factions, as well Somali elders, and representatives of other non-military groups. The TNC had the potential of being the first step toward restoration of Somali political and civil institutions. It was doomed, however, by the lack of U.S. commitment to political restoration within Somalia and consequent U.S. military reluctance to take on a broader security role. Additionally, UNITAF's tendency to deal directly with one or two key warlords gave the impression of a lack of neutrality, which, in turn, was at odds with UN attempts to work through non-military leaders. With no

¹⁴ Ibid, 25

military threat to drive them, the warring parties of Somalia had little incentive to pay more than lip service to the goals of the TNC and they simply waited out the end of UNITAF.

The emphasis by President Bush and General Colin Powell on the limitations of the military mission and its short duration led former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger to comment, "If the warlords listened to the explanations of Bush and Powell, they would lay low and cooperate until U.S. forces withdrew before renewing their struggle for power."¹⁵ Which, of course, is precisely what they did, forgetting the promises made for the transitional council.

THE "SUCCESS" OF UNITAF

The UNITAF mission has been widely regarded as a successful example of peace enforcement and humanitarian assistance. The use of overwhelming force and clearly defined limited objectives are considered classic examples of how to do it right. While it is undoubtedly true that many people were fed and avoided starvation, a more detailed analysis of the mission within the overall tragedy of Somalia reveals its serious shortcomings: unwillingness to commit for the duration, lack of plans to get at the other problems that lay at the root of the situation, and a serious disconnect between the UNITAF mission and UN strategic objectives for Somalia. Those shortcomings have their roots in the fear of some senior military leaders of excessive political "interference."

POL-MIL LESSONS FOR THE CINC OR JTF COMMANDER

MILITARY SHORTCOMINGS DURING UNITAF

There were many forces at work in Somalia, some of which could be addressed by the military, some of which could not. Military shortcomings derived from the belief

¹⁵ Ibid, 22

that politicians should stay out of the way once the military was given the problem.

Some problems included:

- The fear by senior military leadership of political intervention
- The U.S. desire to define the problem strictly within military terms.
- Attempting to overlay the template of the Weinberger-Powell Doctrine in a MOOTW situation.
- Failure to do military planning in conjunction with other organizations to address all aspects of the problem.
- Military participation in policy determination at an unprecedented level.

If we keep in mind that war springs from some political purpose, it is natural that the prime cause of its existence will remain the supreme consideration in conducting it. That, however, does not imply that the political aim is a tyrant. It must adapt itself to its chosen means, a process which can radically change it; yet the political aim remains the first consideration. Policy, then will permeate all military operations, and in so far as their violent nature admits, it will have a continuous influence on them.¹⁶

Some might argue that Clausewitz was speaking in the context of 19th century warfare and his words have little bearing in MOOTW; this is not so. The political object giving rise to a MOOTW is still the prime cause for its existence. Therefore, as it's prime motive for being, the strategic objective will dictate the limitations to be imposed upon military forces trying to accomplish it, and will influence those forces at whatever level necessary to achieve the desired political objective. While the strategic objective may change frequently, that does not mean that it should be modified, or that such changes should be minimized by, military leaders who are simply trying to remove

¹⁶ Carl Von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. and trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), 87.

political ‘interference’ in order to get the job done within a pre-conceived framework of what the military does and doesn’t do.

If there is anything new to be added to what Clausewitz wrote, it would be that military means cannot operate alone in achieving the strategic objective. In MOOTW, military means should be one factor of several trying to get at and solve the problem. Military means may be the enabling force that allows political, social, economic, and civil factors to be effectively addressed by the other organs of government. As such, military means must be coordinated with other agencies as one part of an overall strategy designed to solve the underlying problem. When confronted with the strategic objective for a broader mission the military commander for Somalia might easily have said, “Yes we can do the security mission- let me show you what the military means required would be, and how those means will fit in with other operations designed to address the overall problem in Somalia.” The military commander cannot just simply say, “Interference by non-military organizations, and unrealistic and varying political guidance must be minimized so that I can achieve my task with a minimum of fuss.” Had this been done in Somalia, much of the resulting loss of life might have been avoided.

“The soldier should never have to state what the policy should be. He should stand in his role of saying to the statesman: what is it you want? The statesman should say: this is what we want-what are the military requirements for the reasonable assurance of the attainment of such objectives?”¹⁷

Given the complex and variable political objectives associated with MOOTW, should the CINC or JTFC have a voice in policy determination? General Ridgeway’s

¹⁷ A. J. Bacevich, *The Military and Society Civil-Military relations*, ed Peter Karsten (New York: Garland Publishing, 1998), 204.

statement remains as true today; the obligation of the military commander is to understand the strategic object and then advise political leaders on how best to use military means to attain them. This may require the operational commander to say, "We can do 'X' to create conditions 'Y,' but this can only be done if 'Z' conditions are first negotiated by the State Department. To achieve the strategic objectives will require After the military mission is complete. As demonstrated by the role of the military in formulating policy for the UNITAF mission, the military commander must resist the urge, however tempting, to participate in policy determination, an area where he has little training. By resisting this urge, objectivity can be retained and the role of military force can be fully explored within the entire framework of options.

POLITICAL SHORTCOMINGS DURING UNITAF

It is not possible in this paper to give a detailed analysis of all the political shortcomings associated with Somalia. A brief list might include:

- failure to understand the true reality in Somalia
- insistence upon a short duration operation
- failure to address the other levers of power
- allowing military leadership such a large role in policy determination
- failure to cooperate more closely with the UN

Of more interest to the military commander is the question "what, if any, obligation do political leaders have in their use of the military as an instrument of policy?" The ultimate answer in a democracy is that they (political leaders) don't have any. Political leaders owe their obligations to the people, who will ultimately express their approval or disapproval at the ballot box. Ultimately, civilian leadership has the

final decision on the what, when, where, and how of the military means to be employed.

Clearly though, civilian leaders would do well to listen to the council of military commanders when deciding upon policy objectives, but they are under no obligation to do so.

The military commander should not participate in formulating policy beyond those times that his expertise is required to effectively analyze a potential policy objective and its achievability. In the words of former CJCS General John Shalikashvili "His job is to design options, and seek clarification of political tasks, not to generate broad definitions of American foreign policy interests or appraisals of American willpower."¹⁸

ROLE OF THE CINC OR JTFC IN PLANNING A MOOTW

Having seen what can happen when well-intentioned military leaders fail to understand the inherent necessity for active political involvement in all aspects of MOOTW and attempt to operate in isolation from other government agencies, how can the CINC or JTFC more effectively plan for these operations?

It might seem, that given the multitude of variables associated with MOOTW and the dynamic nature of the political objectives, it would be impossible to effectively plan in advance. However, while no two MOOTW will be the same, there are two principle mechanisms available to a CINC or JTFC to assist in planning and executing these missions. The Theater Engagement Plan (TEP) and the POL-MIL Plan.

THE THEATER ENGAGEMENT PLAN

¹⁸ Lyle J. Goldstein, "General Shalikashvili and the Civil-Military Relations of Peace Keeping," Spring 2000.
<http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?TS+976209901&Did=00000054805707&Mtd=1&Fmt=3> [07 December 2000]

The TEP can provide a good starting point for the CINC/JTFC when crisis action planning for a MOOTW. The TEP developed by the CINC, as a part of the Joint Strategic Capabilities Plan (JSCP) is designed to address political, economic, social and military factors that will aid in maintaining regional stability. Updated annually, the TEP should also include use of Flexible Deterrent Options (FDOs) to aid in escalation control and to serve as interim measures while the POL-MIL Plan is developed if directed. FDOs aimed at diplomatic, economic, and informational objectives provide the CINC/JTFC additional arrows for his quiver and broaden the approach to the problem.

The TEP should be developed jointly, is so far as practicable, between the applicable country team, other organizations, and the J5. The resulting TEP while not directly tasking those outside the military, should constitute a framework of anticipated and expected actions to be taken by or made available to the various organizations involved. Reluctance to commit to concrete courses of action in every instance is understandable, and even desirable. The goal here is to get a general idea of what and how the other organizations potentially involved may be thinking.

THE POL-MIL PLAN

In May Of 1997, the Clinton Administration issued Presidential Decision Directive 56 (PDD-56), which was intended to provide an inter-agency mechanism for managing complex contingency operations, such as Somalia. One aspect of PDD-56 is to "integrate all components of a U.S. response (civilian, military, police, etc.) at the policy level and facilitate creation of coordination mechanisms at the operational level."¹⁹ Complex contingency operations are to be supervised via the membership of an

¹⁹ Presidential Decision Directive - 56, "The Clinton Administration Policy On Managing Complex Contingency Operations," May 1997, 2.

Executive Committee (ExComm) established for the operation. "Members of the ExComm effectively serve as functional managers for specific elements of the U.S. response..."²⁰ The CINC or JTFC, via the J5, should be a part of this planning and execution committee. The vision of PDD 56 is such that once the NCA has determined the need for a complex contingency operation the committee will form and develop a POL-MIL plan as an integrated planning tool for all the tasked agencies involved. Active CINC/JTFC participation during POL-MIL plan development ensures that military forces are fully integrated within the overall plan of action for the crisis.

CONCLUSIONS

"Some, at least in my profession, would prefer that we put a sign outside the Pentagon that says 'We only do the big ones.' That is because we feel comfortable with yesterday. We understand terms like 'overwhelming force'...But as strong as the temptation may be to do this, the fact is that we cannot...The challenges we face simply are not built for black-and-white, clear-cut solutions."²¹ (General Shalikashvili, May 1995)

Historically, the U.S. military has always been involved, albeit reluctantly, in what we today term MOOTW. With the end of the Cold War the use of the military in MOOTW as a tool of policy when U.S. national interest is not directly affected became more common. The nature of these missions inherently results in more political involvement at nearly every level of operational art for the CINC or JTFC. This increased political intercourse is in fact beneficial and necessary to achieving a successful outcome. Utilizing the vehicles of the TEP for pre-crisis planning and the POL-MIL plan

²⁰ Ibid, 3.

²¹ Ibid

for complex contingency planning will allow the CINC or JTFC an easier road to travel.

The road will be easier because instead of trying to work outside the non-military agencies involved, and consequently at odds with them, the military will be a part of an integrated approach. By planning early, and taking the initiative the CINC or JTFC can take charge of coordination with non-military groups and avoid confrontation later on.

As shown by the Somalia UNITAF case study analysis, attempts by senior military leaders, however well intended, to minimize the problem of potential political 'interference', in fact contributed to the overall failure of strategic objectives for Somalia. Therefore, the CINC and JTFC must be wary of the trap of believing that military forces can operate as a lone instrument of power. PDD-56 states that for the foreseeable future in MOOTW, the U.S. will likely be a part of a coalition whenever possible, likewise, the military commander should expect to operate as one of several instruments of policy, not as a sole, independent instrument.

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